

Hashtags



LESSON OBJECTIVE

Students will learn how hashtags have been effective in promoting social movements. Students will also identify how hashtags on social media can help raise awareness about an advocacy issue and will develop their own hashtag and methods of promotion for a cause that interests them.



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| <p>▶ ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How have others made use of hashtags to promote a cause? ▶ How can you use hashtags to raise awareness around an issue? | |
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| <p>▶ AGE</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 11-18 | |
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| <p>▶ PREPARATION</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify a video to demonstrate how media can be used to foster awareness and advocacy relevant to your community ▶ Students need internet access to complete this lesson | |
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| <p>▶ ISTE DIGCITCOMMIT COMPETENCY</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ENGAGED: I use technology and digital channels for civic engagement, to solve problems and be a force for good in both physical and virtual communities. | |
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SUPPORT MATERIALS

Visit facebook.com/fbgetdigital to access resources for parents and young people that can complement the lesson students took on Empowerment today.

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Activism using hashtags

TELL YOUR STUDENTS

While individuals often use specific social media platforms in advocacy campaigns for particular reasons, these platforms share certain characteristics. One helpful common feature is the hashtag. Hashtags allow us to draw attention to our ideas by connecting our posts to other posts on the same topic. For instance, if we wanted to share videos from our recent football game where our striker performed a hat trick, we could include “#football” and “#hatrick” in the description of the video to allow other people looking for football videos to see it. This way, we could increase the chances that professional sports scouts might view our videos.

Hashtags are especially useful for advocacy projects. For instance, after the shooting of Trayvon Martin in Florida, USA by a police officer, a number of advocates began writing posts about race relations in the United States and including the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. With the increasing popularity of the hashtag, more and more people were able to see posts about individuals’ experiences as persons of color and their engagement with the police in the United States today by searching for “#BlackLivesMatter.” Through social media activism, Black Lives Matter developed into a strong advocacy movement supported by powerful people.

The hashtag is a powerful form of social media on a global scale. When the terrorist organization Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls from their high school in Chibok, Nigeria, people in Nigeria tried to raise awareness around the issue on social media by posting content online with the hashtag “#BringBackOurGirls.” The issue quickly garnered global support, with powerful celebrities and public figures supporting the cause.

There are many other examples of using hashtags for advocacy around the world. For instance, Mexican university students used “#YoSoy132” in the 2012 presidential election, Hong Kong university students rallied around the “#umbrellarevolution” hashtag during the democracy protests of 2014 and Chilean university students used “#MovimientoEstudiantil” to advocate for educational reform.

When you are advocating for a cause, using hashtags is a great way to reach an audience with your ideas. In the following exercise, we will explore the use of hashtags on social media.

Assignment

Part 1

CLASS INTERACTION

Organize students into pairs.

TELL YOUR STUDENTS

In teams of two, find a hashtag that has recently been used to promote a cause. Once you find a hashtag, review the conversations taking place and in your team, come up with a short summary of what is being discussed. You will present this summary orally to the rest of the group. You will have 15 minutes to find a hashtag and come up with a summary.

CLASS INTERACTION

Give students 15 minutes to work. Once they are finished, allow for 15 minutes for each pair to present their summaries to the group.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS

- ▶ What kind of content is being shared using the hashtags?
- ▶ Are there similar conversations happening under these different hashtags? Why do you think this is/is not happening?
- ▶ Do some hashtags seem to be more effective (e.g., more likely to be reposted) than others? Which ones? Why?

Part 2

TELL YOUR STUDENTS

Now, come up with an issue that is important to your pair and:

1. Create a hashtag for it.
2. Design an image, infographic, meme, chart or graph to promote your hashtag.
3. With your partner, discuss various ways that you can spread your hashtag through a network. What are some successful strategies we learned from examining other hashtags?

You will have 30 minutes to complete this exercise.

CLASS INTERACTION

Give students 30 minutes to engage in this exercise with their partner. Afterwards, allow 20 minutes for pairs to discuss, with the larger group, their hashtag, accompanying visual and ideas for spreading the hashtag.

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